enables formation of an image having excellent image quality.

The copolymer in the invention will be explained below.

The copolymer in the invention is comprised of a combination of a high Tg monomer, a low Tg monomer and a hydrophilic monomer. Regarding a typical composition ratio of each monomer in the copolymer in the invention, it is preferable that a ratio of the high Tg monomer and the low Tg monomer (high Tg monomer: low Tg monomer) is in the range of 50:50 to 95:5. In addition, a ratio of the hydrophilic monomer relative to each monomer is preferably 0.5 to 10% by mass, and more preferably 1 to 5% by mass. When the composition ratio of each monomer in the copolymer in the invention is in the aforementioned preferable range, the effect of the invention becomes more remarkable.

Specific examples of the high Tg monomer include methyl methacrylate, ethyl methacrylate, isopropyl methacrylate, vinylpyrrolidone, vinylformal, vinylcarbozole, cyclohexylethylene, vinyl chloride, acrylonitrile, vinylacetal, hexafluoropropylene, methylchloroacrylic acid, ethylchloroacrylic acid and vinylisobutyral.

Examples of the low Tg monomer include butyl acrylate, butyl methacrylate, dodecyl methacrylate, glycidyl methacrylate, octadecyl methacrylate, octyl methacrylate, pentyl methacryalte, propyl methacrylate, tetradecyl methacrylate, vinyl methyl ether, vinyl ethyl ether, vinyl

butyl ether, vinyl isobutyl ether, vinylbutyral, vinyl acetate, and butylchloroacrylic acid.

Examples of the hydrophilic monomer include monomers having a nitrogen-containing polar group such as an amido group, an amino group and the like, and vinylcarboxylic acids such as methacrylic acid, acrylic acid, cinnamic acid and carboxyethyl acrylate.

Examples of a typical combination of each monomer in the copolymer in the invention include a combination of methyl methacrylate as the high Tg monomer, butyl acrylate as the low Tg monomer and acrylic acid as the hydrophilic monomer, a combination of ethyl methacrylate as the high Tg monomer, butyl methacrylate as the low Tg monomer and carboxyethyl acrylate as the hydrophilic monomer, a combination of vinylisobutyral as the high Tg monomer, octyl methacrylate as the low Tg monomer and methacrylic acid as the hydrophilic monomer, and the like.

In the copolymer in the invention, it is preferable that at least one of the high Tg monomer and the low Tg monomer is a methacrylic ester or an acrylic ester.

The aforementioned toner of the invention may be prepared by any process, and is preferably prepared via at least an aggregating step of aggregating particles comprising fine particles of a binder resin (hereinafter, referred to as "binder resin fine particles" in some cases) having a copolymer comprised of a combination of the high Tg monomer, a low Tg